(b) the progress made in these negotiations; and

(c) whether the US is imposing new conditions on India for finalization of this deal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Nicholas Burns visited New Delhi from 1 8—20 January 2006 held talks with Foreign Secretary at the third meeting of the India-US Working Group on co-operation in civil nuclear energy. This meeting focussed on steps by both sides to implement their commitments and responsibilities as agreed to in the India-US Joint Statement of 18 July 2005. India shared some preliminary ideas about the kind of separation plan of our civil and military facilities that India is contemplating and the parameters determining our approach to the separation plan. The two sides also discussed some other components of that proposed agreement. Following the talks, there is a much better understanding of the kind of perspectives that each side has with regard to various aspects of this proposed agreement.

(c) US has not imposed any new conditions for finalization of the understanding on co-operation in civil nuclear energy. Government has made it clear to the US side that both countries needed to work in the framework of the 18 July, 2005 Joint Statement and in strict conformity with the reciprocal commitments contained therein.

Purchase of Atomic Reactor by Pakistan

† 422. SHRI MOTILAL VORA Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Pakistan is purchasing Atomic Reactor from China to increase its atomic capability;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government would initiate any dialogue with Chinese Government in this regard keeping in view the threats arising out of this increase in atomic capability of Pakistan;

(d)ifso, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) It was reported in the media (Financial Times) that Pakistan may be negotiating the purchase of six to eight nuclear reactors from China during the next decade to augment its nuclear energy capability. However, the spokesman of Pakistani Foreign Ministry was quoted on 3 January, 2006 by the British Broadcasting Corporation as saying that while Pakistan needed nuclear energy to feed its growing economy, the Financial Times report was "baseless". China has already built a Nuclear Power Plant in Pakistan at Chasma (Chasma-1 of 300 MW). China has also signed an agreement with Pakistan to built another nuclear power plant (Chasma-ll). This agreement was concluded before China became a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

(b) to (e) We have a Bilateral Security Dialogue mechanism with China, wherein all the issues impinging on India's national security are discussed.

Indo-Us Nuclear Agreement

423. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the competent authority is aware that eight former Indian Ambassadors have issued a press statement on Indo-US nuclear agreement that appeared in national dailies on 7th February, 2006;

(b) if so, whether above statement tends to put aside the present policy of reticence and make public the nuclear deal; and

(c) if so, the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) The Government has seen media reports of former diplomats expressing a wide variety of views on the extent and implications of the India-US understanding on cooperation in civil nuclear energy.

(b) and (c) The Government is presently engaged in difficult and complex talks with the US Government. The delicate and sensitive nature of the ongoing talks and the internationally accepted practices of diplomatic negotiations are being taken into account in approaching this issue. The Government is committed to take the Parliament in confidence, as was reflected in Prime Minister's *suo moto* statement in Parliament on